

Book of the Week.

GEOFFREY CHERITON.*

Geoffrey Cheriton is distinctly a powerful book. Possessing little or no plot, no very exciting or thrilling incidents, the reader nevertheless feels himself in the grip of an absorbing interest which carries him through the volume, sympathising with Geoffrey, whose keen power of feeling deeply, and dumb powerlessness of expressing himself, are often pathetic.

The female element is very sparingly introduced, in spite of which her influence has much to do with the working out of the story, the making, and in a measure the marring of two men's lives.

"Geoffrey Cheriton" is the story of a young fellow's life during the years of his early manhood. The characters of Geoffrey and his two friends, Gerald Iggulden and Stanley Niblett, are admirably and consistently worked out. Geoffrey with his hyper-sensitiveness and utter depreciation of himself, longing for affection, yet hardly daring to believe in it or accept it when offered to him, is blindly loyal to his friend Iggulden, who possesses "that vague compelling charm which was apparent in its richest flower in the luckless Stuart race. They were selfish and bad, and yet men went gladly and proudly to their deaths for them. Iggulden had some few faults, but certainly he had that kingly quality."

The book opens at Haileybury: The last football match of the term, which is stirringly described, is being played, with Geoffrey and Iggulden both in it. It is their last school match; lads of nineteen they are both leaving school, Iggulden, the only son of a rich man, passing on to the 'Varsity, Geoffrey into an office in London, where he has been placed by his uncle, with whom he has so far lived during his holidays. Mr. Bolsingham, a childless widower, is on the point of marrying again, decides it will be best for his nephew to be in lodgings, so to Clapham Geoffrey removes his belongings, and starts his solitary life.

The office in which he works has all the usual elements of good and evil to be met with in most places where men of various natures are found together. Luckily for him he falls in with a young fellow who proves a wholesome corrective to his naturally morbid nature. Niblett is a charming character. A few years Geoffrey's senior and a sometime Haileybury boy, now in the same office with Geoffrey. The two are at once attracted to each other, but much as Geoffrey learns to like Niblett, he never at any time holds the place in his affections that the far less worthy Iggulden does. Niblett is simply overflowing with absurdities, a warm-hearted and wholly lovable person, if more than a little eccentric in his methods and modes of speech.

Going down to his home with him for a weekend, Geoffrey meets Niblett's cousin Barbara, who from that moment becomes to him the one woman. Here also he again meets Iggulden, whose home is in the neighbourhood.

Seeing that his friend is also attracted by Bar-

* By John Barnett. (Smith, Elder.)

bara, he quite needlessly effaces himself; this he continues to do through all their subsequent acquaintance, quite unconscious that Barbara has not fallen a victim to Iggulden's charm.

Poor Iggulden, one cannot help feeling sorry for the mess he makes of his life, through vanity and lack of moral fibre. So deftly has the author written about him that the reader feels drawn to him in spite of his many failings. Never having accorded to Geoffrey more than a kind of patronising, tolerant friendship, he still realises fully that it is to him he can turn in any trouble, and that Geoffrey will never fail him. When he is sent down from Oxford, it is to him he comes to get him to induce his father to allow him to return to College. This the old man refuses to do, placing Iggulden in a stockbroker's office, promising forgiveness if he keeps straight for a year. He now comes to live in rooms with Geoffrey, and for a time all goes well, but being in love with the same girl does not tend to comfort, and Iggulden moves to other rooms.

Then comes the final false step, he "borrows" some of his employer's money, for a so-called safe speculation, which fails. Disgrace follows. Geoffrey never fails him, stands by him through the trial, putting aside all other feelings, meets him when he comes out of prison after two years, a changed and broken man, broken alike in health and spirit.

Were it not for Niblett and the atmosphere of comedy which surrounds him, the book might be almost too tragic.

E. L. H.

COMING EVENTS.

- October 1st.—Hospital Medical Sessions open.
 October 2nd.—Nurses' Missionary League. Farewell meeting, University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C.
 October 7th.—Territorial Force Nursing Service. Meeting Executive Committee, Mansion House, 3 p.m. Reception by Lady Mayoress of members of the Service, 4 to 6 p.m.; music, tea and coffee.
 October 8th.—Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. Meeting of the Executive Committee, 431, Oxford Street, London, W., 4 p.m.
 October 22nd.—Meeting of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, 4 p.m.
 October 25th.—Central Midwives' Board Examination.

Word for the Week.

THE SACRED RULE OF THE LAW.

Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God: her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and on earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempting her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what condition so ever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

HOOVER,

in *Ecclesiastical Policy*.

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